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Congress to probe alleged Barbie-US tie

Associated Press

WASHINGTON - Senate and House intelligence committees have begun looking into alleged links between US intelligence agencies and Klaus Barbie, a convicted Nazi war criminal, officials on Capitol Hill said yesterday.

Justice Department officials, meantime, were weighing a recommendation that they

open their own investigation into possible US complicity in Barbie's escape from Europe after World War II, according to department sources who answered questions on condition they not be identified.

Barbie, a Gestapo chief known as "the Butcher of Lyon," was returned to France last week from Bolivia, where he had lived as a fugitive.

French authorities are preparing to retry Barbie, 69, on charges of crimes against humanity. He was sentenced to death in absentia by a military court, but the permissible time for carrying out the sentence has expired.

Barbie has been accused of responsibility for the deaths of 4000 people and the deportation of about 7500 others to Nazi concentration camps.

Yesterday, Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan (D-N.Y.), vice chairman of the Intelligence Committee, noted that "since last spring, the select committee has been interested in the question of possible ties between former Nazi officials and US intelligence agencies."

"Appropriate inquiries have been made at

various agencies, including most recently inquiries about the activities of Klaus Barbie. The select committee will be pursuing these inquiries in the weeks ahead," Moynihan said in a statement released by his office.

Michael J. O'Neill, chief counsel of the House Intelligence Committee, said when asked about the Barbie allegations: "We are looking into them." He said he could not make any further comment because the committee was in the midst of piecing together information on the case.